

RAILROAD RETIREMENT AND  
SURVIVORS IMPROVEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. MELISSA A. HART**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H.R. 1140, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2001. As a cosponsor and one of the 384 yeas votes, I am pleased to see the House pass this needed legislation.

One of the original meetings I had in my first months in Congress was with a group of widows whose husbands had worked for Conrail in Beaver County in my Pennsylvania district. These women expressed to me how they struggled to pay their high electricity bills and rising health care costs, and that this legislation would go a long way toward helping them meet those costs. Last session, the House approved similar legislation, but the Senate failed to consider it. I hope that the overwhelming support in the House this time will give the momentum we need to give these widows and retirees the relief they need. It also modernizes the pension plan—ensuring that the program will continue to railroad workers and their loved ones.

This legislation not only increases benefits to widows of railroad employees, but also:

Lowers the minimum age of workers with 30 years service eligible for full benefits;

Creates an independent Railroad Retirement Trust Fund; and

Expands the investment authority of the fund to generate better returns.

In a "railroad state" like Pennsylvania, legislation like this provides the needed security for a large portion of our residents. It has the backing of both railroad labor and management.

Now that we have done our part to pass legislation that strengthens railroad retirement, let's make sure that we follow through and get this legislation to the President's desk.

A TRIBUTE TO THE 116 YEARS OF  
SERVICE BY MANHATTAN'S  
GOUVERNEUR HOSPITAL**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Manhattan's Gouverneur Hospital on the occasion of its 116th anniversary. Since opening its doors to the Lower East Side community in 1885, Gouverneur Hospital has been committed to providing dependable high quality health care at an affordable price. From excellent emergency services to quality long-term care, Gouverneur Hospital has been there for its neighbors time and time again throughout the past century. An excellent medical facility and a haven for the community, the Hospital and its staff provide patients with efficient, thoughtful and affordable care.

On September 12th, 2001, Gouverneur Hospital will be holding a fundraising event in

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*August 3, 2001*

honor of its 116th year of service. I am pleased to offer my congratulations to Gouverneur Hospital on this occasion. The money raised at this function will enable the hospital to better meet the needs of the community, by expanding its nursing facilities, acquiring a mobile medical van, and increasing its services to the Chinese community. I also commend the recipients of the Gouverneur Hospital Community Service Award for their invaluable contributions to the Gouverneur Hospital community.

For the services they have provided to the Lower East Side and their dedication to the well-being of the community, I offer my sincere congratulations to Gouverneur Hospital for 116 years of outstanding service.

CONGRATULATING THE CHURCH  
OF KHALISTAN ON 15 YEARS OF  
SERVICE**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, for 15 years of service to the Sikhs, the people of South Asia and America.

Fifteen years ago Dr. Aulakh left a well-paying job to begin striving day in and day out in an effort to draw attention to the plight of the minorities of India. Since that time he has succeeded in raising awareness of the treatment of Christians, Kashmiri Muslims, and other minorities in India and throughout the world. Dr. Aulakh has spoken out on behalf of these people; he has highlighted injustices, and in so doing, has raised the level of awareness of such issues throughout the United States.

On October 7, 1987, the Sikh homeland declared its independence from India. At that time, Dr. Aulakh was named to lead the struggle to regain the lost sovereignty of the Sikhs.

If it were not for Dr. Aulakh's tireless efforts, the human-rights conditions in India would go unexposed and unpunished. Because of his efforts, all of us in Congress are much better informed on these matters and we are more able to take appropriate action. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Aulakh and the Council of Khalistan for their tireless efforts on behalf of freedom.

TORTURE AND POLICE ABUSE IN  
THE OSCE REGION**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, over the July Fourth recess, I had the privilege of participating in the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual meeting held in Paris, where I introduced a resolution on the need for the OSCE participating States—all of our States—to intensify our efforts to combat torture, police abuse, and ra-

cial profiling. This resolution, adopted and included the Assembly's final Declaration, also calls for greater protection for non-governmental organizations, medical personnel, and others who treat the victims of torture and report on their human rights violations. The resolution also condemns the insidious practice of racial profiling, which has the effect of leaving minorities more vulnerable to police abuse. Finally, my resolution calls for the OSCE participating States to adopt, in law and in practice, a complete ban on incommunicado detention.

Tragically, recent news reports only underscore how urgent the problem of police abuse is. I would like to survey a few of the reports received by the Helsinki Commission in recent weeks.

First, on July 7 in Slovakia, the body of Karol Sendrei, a 51-year-old Romani father, was returned to his family. The convoluted account of his death has included mutual re-primations among police officers and, so far, has led to the resignation of the mayor of Magnezitovce and indictments against three police officers. While much remains to be sorted out, this much is clear: On July 5, Mr. Sendrei was taken into police custody. The next day, he died of injuries, including shock caused by a torn liver, cranial and pericardial bleeding, and broken jaw, sternum, and ribs. According to reports, Mr. Sendrei had been chained to a radiator and beaten for the last twelve hours of his life.

The deaths in police custody of Lubomir Sarissky in 1999 and now Mr. Sendrei, persistent reports of police abuse in villages like Hermanovce, and the reluctance of the police and judicial system to respond seriously to racially motivated crimes have all eroded trust in law enforcement in Slovakia. As Americans know from first-hand experience, when the public loses that trust, society as a whole pays dearly.

I welcome the concern for the Sendrei case reflected in the statements of Prime Minister Dzurinda, whom I had the chance to meet at the end of May, and others in his cabinet. But statements alone will not restore confidence in the police among Slovakia's Romani community. Those who are responsible for this death must be held fully accountable before the law. I will continue to follow this case, along with the trials of the three men still being prosecuted for the murder of Anastazia Balazova last year.

Although it has received far less press attention, in Hungary, a Romani man was also shot and killed on June 30 by an off-duty police officer in Budapest; one other person was injured in that shooting. While the police officer in that case has been arrested, too often reports of police misconduct in Hungary are ignored or have been countered with a slap on the wrist. I remain particularly alarmed by the persistent reports of police brutality in Hajduhadhaz and police reprisals against those who have reported their abuse to the Helsinki Commission. In one case, a teenager in Hajduhadhaz who had reported being abused by the police was detained by the police again—after his case had been brought to the attention of the Helsinki Commission, and after Helsinki Commission staff had raised it with the Hungarian Ambassador. In an apparent attempt to intimidate this boy, the police